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UNCLAS DJIBOUTI 001494

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PREL](#) [OPRC](#) [SCUL](#) [KPAO](#) [DJ](#)

SUBJECT: EMBASSY DJIBOUTI REACHES OUT FOR RAMADAN

1. (U) SUMMARY: Embassy Djibouti sponsored an information speech, several Iftaars (fast breakings) and a public service announcement during the Islamic Holy Month of Ramadan. Embassy staff also attended several Iftaars as part of its continued outreach to the country's Muslim community. END SUMMARY

2. (U) The Ambassador, Political Officer and U.S. Liaison Officer hosted Iftaars for women leaders, business leaders, political contacts and defense establishment contacts, respectively, during the Islamic Holy Month of Ramadan for 2004. Each was well attended and well appreciated. They served as an excellent opportunity to bring contacts together from every section, as well as to introduce influential community members to many of the new staff at Embassy Djibouti. The inter-agency Women's Iftaar hosted by the Ambassador and spearheaded by the Pol/Econ Officer, was particularly well received and well attended by members of the government, parliament, private business, health and education sectors. Iftaar attendees often expressed their gratitude for the consideration the Embassy demonstrated by organizing events for Ramadan, and some were especially grateful that they were held in the private residences of Americans, as opposed to a reception area in town.

3. (U) Djiboutians also reciprocated by hosting Iftaars to which member of the U.S. Embassy and Camp Lemonier were invited, among other guests. The Ambassador and CJTF-HOA Commander General Samuel Helland attended a particularly sumptuous Iftaar given by the Commander of Djiboutian Military Forces, General Fathi Ahmed Houssein. Other mission staff also benefited from invitation that extended from very simple to more elaborate affairs.

3. (U) The Public Diplomacy Office placed a notice in the local newspapers in both French and Arabic wishing all Muslims a safe and productive Ramadan. Public Diplomacy also organized a "Ramadan Information Speech" for members of the Embassy and American military Community. The speech, attended by about 30 Americans, took place at the Embassy and was offered by a member of a moderate Islamic social service organization. The Embassy's effort to learn more about the most important month in this majority Muslim nation was well received by the mission staff, as well as by the social service organization, and the event had both educational and positive word-of-mouth public diplomacy benefits
RAGSDALE